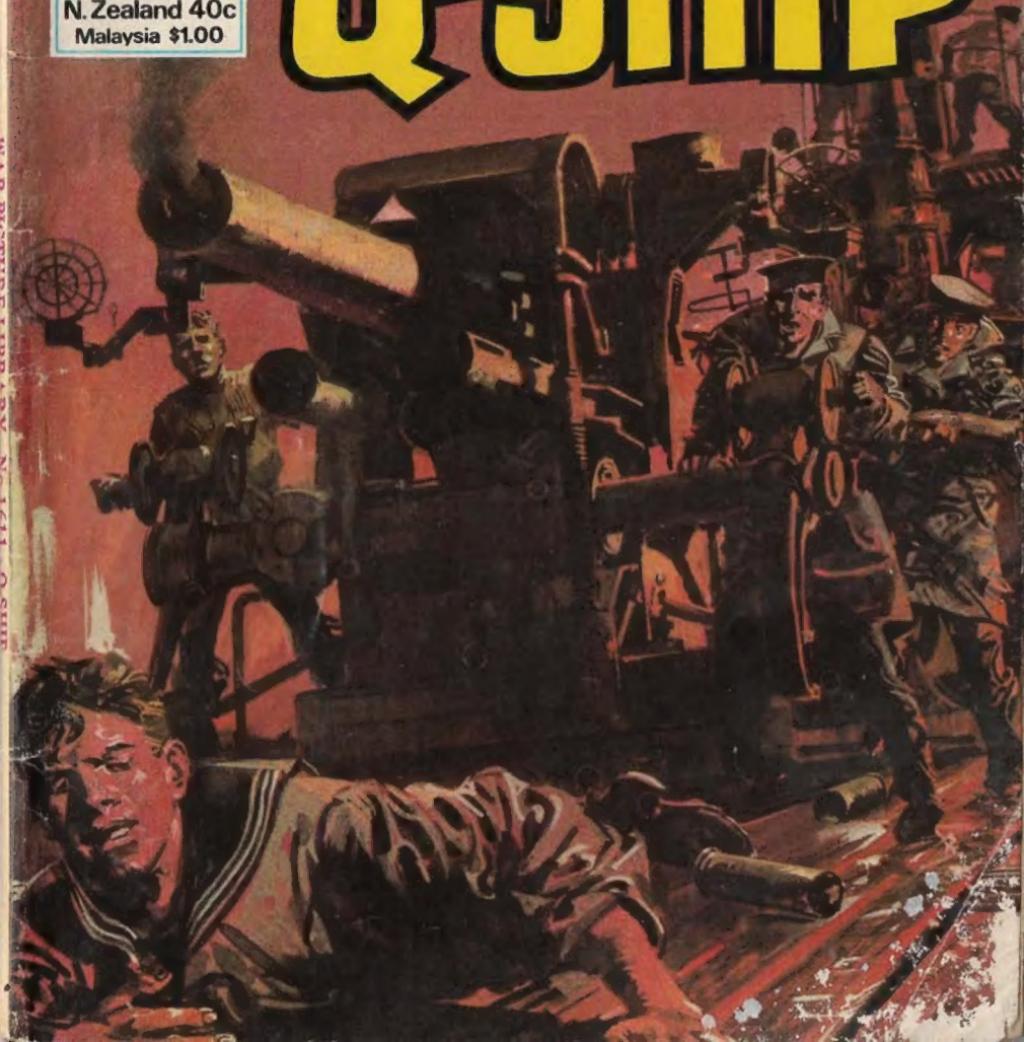


AUG 1979



Q-SHIP



ALSO ON SALE NOW...

BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

- No.1265 THE KILLER BREED
- No.1266 THE DEAD KEEP FAITH
- No.1267 SEA DEVIL
- No.1268 THE SKY'S THE LIMIT
- No.1269 LINE OF ADVANCE
- No.1270 FRIDAY THE 13TH
- No.1271 FIGHTING FURY
- No.1272 A CHANCE TO DIE

**PACKED
WITH
DRAMATIC
BATTLE
ACTION!**



EIGHT GREAT ISSUES EVERY MONTH

Q-SHIP

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR,
THE GERMAN NAVY WAS RENOWNED
FOR ITS RAIDING TACTICS. DEADLY
U-BOATS PROWLED IN WOLF PACKS
AND DISGUISED SURFACE RAIDERS
— Q-SHIPS — SAILED THE SEAS
BENT ON DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.
MANY ALLIED VESSELS LEFT HARBOUR NEVER TO REACH THEIR
DESTINATION ...

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Chapter 1. Killer Hunt

ALWAYS SHORT OF SHIPS TO DEFEND THE ISLAND'S TRADE ROUTES, THE ROYAL NAVY HAD EQUIPPED A NUMBER OF LINERS AS ARMED MERCHANT CRUISERS. SUCH A SHIP WAS H.M.S. FORSYTE, PATROLLING IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC . . .

EVERYTHING ALL
RIGHT, ALLEN?
NOTHING TO
REPORT?

NOTHING, SIR.
ALL QUIET.

SUB-LIEUTENANT JOHN ALLEN
KNEW THAT WAS THE WAY
COMMANDER SOAMES, CAPTAIN
OF THE SHIP, LIKED THINGS QUIET.

BUT COMMANDER SOAMES' HOPES OF A PEACEFUL AND
UNEVENTFUL DAY WERE IMMEDIATELY SHATTERED . . .

DISTRESS CALL,
SIR! THEY GAVE THEIR
POSITION — THEN
TRANSMISSION STOPPED!

I SUPPOSE
WE'D BETTER
INVESTIGATE . . .

WITH A SIGH OF ANNOYANCE, THE COMMANDER READ THE DISTRESS SIGNAL. WEARILY, HE TURNED TO LIEUTENANT ALLEN...

IT'S POINTLESS, ALLEN. IT'LL TAKE US FOUR HOURS TO GET TO THIS POSITION - AND BY THAT TIME THERE'LL BE NOTHING THERE... BUT TURN ON TO COURSE.

STEER COURSE ONE SEVEN FIVE! FULL REVOLUTIONS!

ENGINES THROBBING AT FULL SPEED, H.M.S. FORSYTE TURNED ON A NEW COURSE, AND HEADED TOWARDS THE POSITION FROM WHICH THE MYSTERIOUS DISTRESS SIGNAL HAD COME.



ON DECK, THE AFT GUNCREW WERE RELUCTANTLY TESTING THEIR SPEED IN FIRING PRACTICE. CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER WAS SCATHING IN HIS CRITICISM...

YOU CLUMSY-FINGERED CLOT, JOEY!

I COULDN'T HELP IT!
THE SHIP ROLLED.

YOU'VE DONE IT THIS TIME, LARKIN! CAPTAIN'S ORDERS FOR YOU!



AS THE SIX-INCH SHELL PLUNGED OVERBOARD, HARKER LASHED THE GUN-TEAM BACK INTO MORE PRACTICE.

WHAT A SHIP! IT'S LIKE A PLEASURE-CRUISER. THE CREW IS AS BONE-IDLE AS THE CAPTAIN. AS SOON AS WE MAKE PORT I'LL PUT IN FOR A TRANSFER.

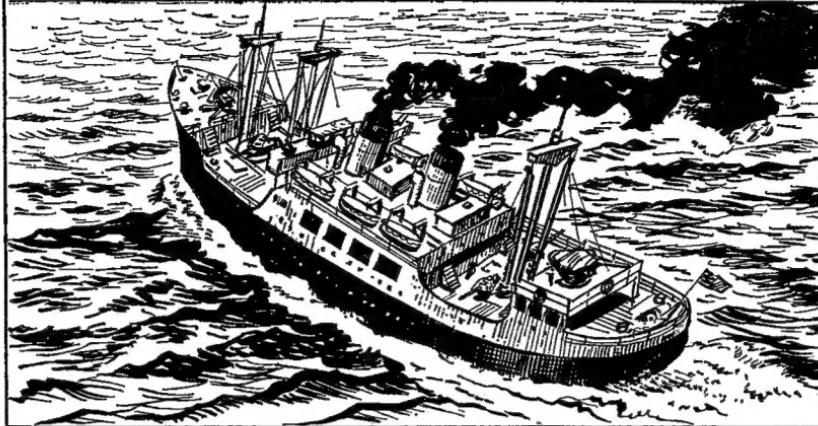


UP ON THE BRIDGE, SUB-LIEUTENANT JOHN ALLEN SHARED HARKER'S GLOOMY THOUGHTS...

ALL THE SKIPPER WANTS TO DO IS STICK IN HIS CABIN READING HIS BOOKS. AS SOON AS WE MAKE PORT, I'LL PUT IN FOR A TRANSFER.



ALL WAS SILENT AS H.M.S. FORSYTE PLUNGED ACROSS THE ROLLING OCEAN. ONLY LIEUTENANT ALLEN AND CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER WERE EAGER FOR THE UNKNOWN WHICH LAY AHEAD.



THAT ABRUPTLY-ENDED DISTRESS CALL HAD ALSO BEEN RECEIVED BY THE S.S. KANTARA STAR, VOYAGING HOME TO LIVERPOOL.

HELLO!
SOMETHING
UP?

WE'VE PICKED UP
A DISTRESS CALL
FROM ABOUT THIRTY
MILES OFF. WE'RE GOING
TO SEE IF WE CAN HELP.

MAJOR BRUCE DRIVER FELT A QUICKENING OF INTEREST.
ANXIOUS AS HE WAS TO GET BACK TO ENGLAND, A LITTLE EXCITEMENT AT SEA WOULD BREAK HIS PRESENT BOREDOM.

I FEEL A BIT USELESS –
A SOLDIER ABOARD SHIP, BUT
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO...

THANK YOU,
MAJOR, I'LL
TELL THE
CAPTAIN.



S.S. KANTARA STAR TURNED ON TO THE NEW COURSE AT MAXIMUM SPEED. THE CAPTAIN KNEW THAT LIVES COULD BE AT STAKE.

WE MUST HAVE MORE SPEED, MAC!



THE BOILERS'LL BLOW YE SKY-HIGH, MON. WE'LL NO GET MORE OUT OF 'EM!

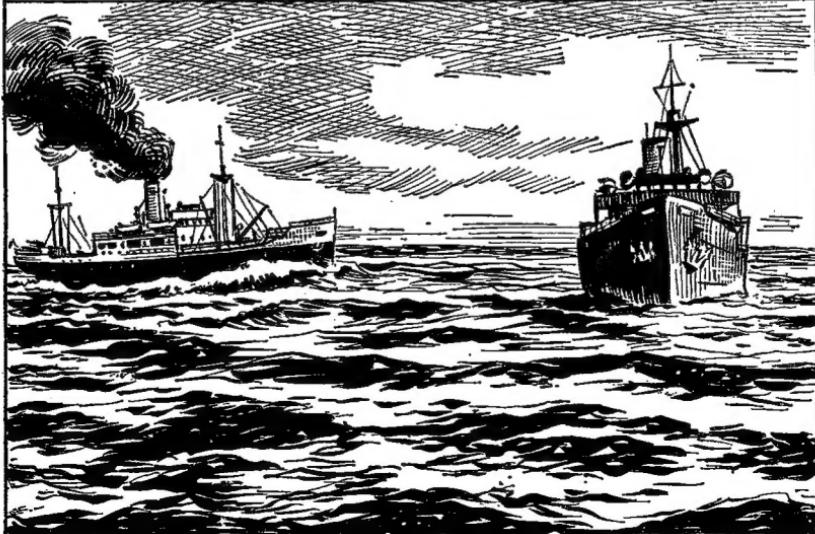
EVERY EYE STRAINED TO PIERCE THE DISTANT HORIZON LINE. THE MINUTES SLOWLY TICKED AWAY. THEN...

THERE SHE IS! ON THE PORT BOW!

SO SHE'S STILL AFLOAT THEN.



HER WHOLE FRAME QUIVERING FROM THE POUNDING OF HER OVER-STRAINED ENGINES, S.S. KANTARA STAR FORGED UP TO THE SHIP IN DISTRESS ...



Q-Ship

9

MAJOR BRUCE DRIVER LOOKED OUT WITH THE OTHERS, HIS LANDSMAN'S EYES SEEING ONLY A MERCHANT SHIP RIDING SILENTLY IN THE WATER.

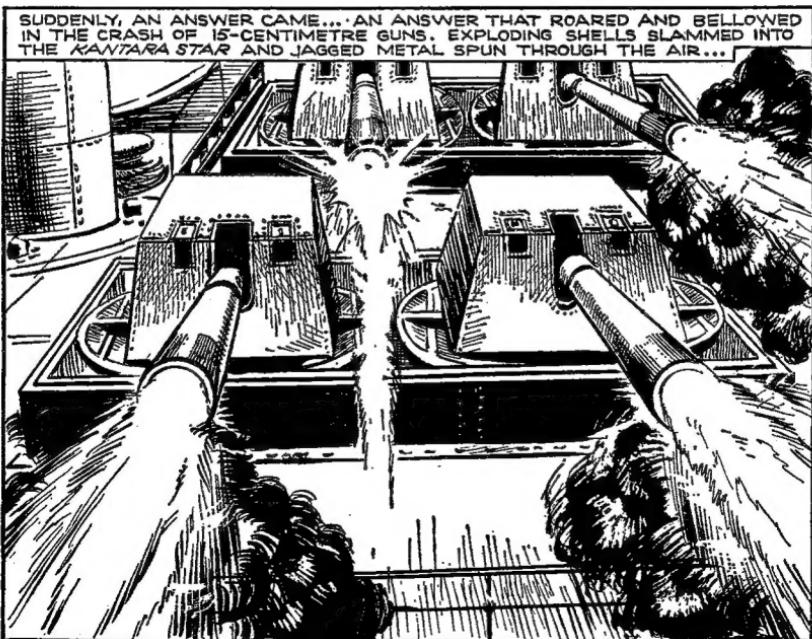
DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYONE ABOARD. PERHAPS THEY ALL ABANDONED SHIP AND SHE DIDN'T SINK!



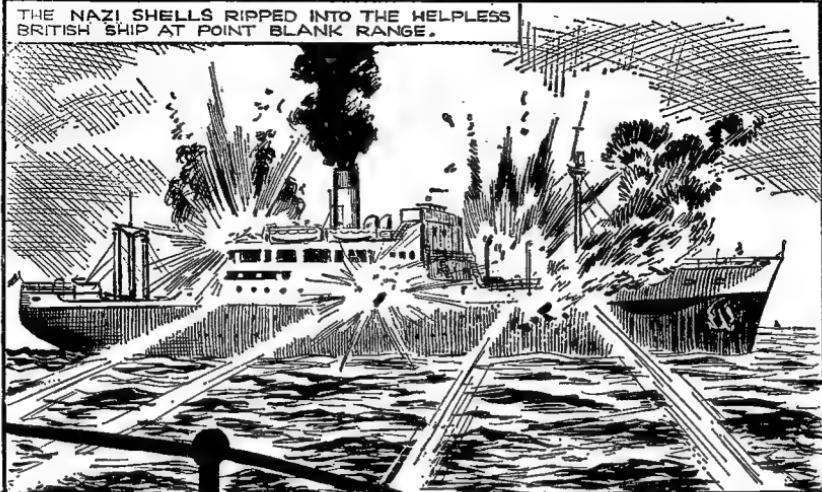
THE CAPTAIN'S AMPLIFIED VOICE BOOMED FROM THE LOUDHAILER...

AHOY THERE!
WHAT SHIP IS THAT?
WHAT'S YOUR TROUBLE?





THE NAZI SHELLS RIPPED INTO THE HELPLESS
BRITISH SHIP AT POINT BLANK RANGE.



IN THAT MIGHTY
BLAST OF FLAME
AND STEEL THE
BRITISH SHIP
SHUDDERED. THE
CAPTAIN GAVE
THE ONLY ORDER
POSSIBLE.

ABANDON
SHIP!



AS THE ORDER RANG OUT,
MAJOR BRUCE DRIVER,
HALF-DEAFENED BY THE
CONCUSSION OF THE
EXPLODING SHELLS,
STAGGERED BACK TO THE
RAIL...

THE COLD-BLOODED
MURDERERS! IF ONLY
WE HAD SOMETHING
TO SHOOT BACK WITH...

THE SINGLE SIX-INCH GUN MOUNTED ON THE
KANTARA STAR'S POOP HAD NOT HAD A
CHANCE TO FIRE A SINGLE ROUND.



THE SEA HISSED AND BOILED ... MEN STRUGGLED DESPERATELY AWAY FROM THE DEADLY SUCTION OF THE SINKING SHIP. HIS MIND SEETHING WITH HOPELESS ANGER, BRUCE DRIVER THRASHED TOWARDS A FLAILING SAILOR...



ON THE BRIDGE OF THE GERMAN RAIDER GEIER, KAPITAN SIEGFRIED LUTZ COLDLY SURVEYED THE SCENE OF TERROR.

SHE IS SINKING...
GOOD SHOOTING,
KARL!



THE KANTARA STAR HAD HAD NO TIME TO SEND OUT A DISTRESS CALL. ARROGANTLY, THE GERMANS PICKED UP THE SURVIVORS...

MOVE, ENGLISH PIGS!

UP YOU GO, DUSTY. GRAB A ROPE.

IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU, MAJOR. I'D BE SHAKIN' HANDS WITH DAVY JONES NOW!

GASPING FOR BREATH, THE ENGLISHMEN CLAMBERED OVER THE SHIP'S RAIL, AND DROPPED WEARILY TO THE DECK ...

MOVE ALONG, ENGLANDER! FOR YOU, THE WAR IS OVER.

AT LAST, ALL THE SURVIVORS
WERE ABOARD AND THE
GEER STEAMED WESTWARDS.
A FEW SHATTERED RELICS
OF THE KANTARA STAR
FLOATED ON THE ROLLING SEA...



AT THE ADMIRALTY IN LONDON, A SEA LORD'S TEMPER BECAME 'PEPPERY
AS THE FLOOD OF MESSAGES, REPORTING BRITISH SHIPPING LOSSES
IN THE ATLANTIC, INCREASED DAY BY DAY.

THERE'S A GERMAN
SURFACE RAIDER OUT
THERE, THAT'S PLAIN.
WHAT SHIPS HAVE
WE IN THE AREA?

FORSYTE, SIR...
COMMANDER
SOAMES ...





UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE MEN, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER ENTERED AT THAT MOMENT...

EVEN JINX SHIPS
NEED CLEANING!
NONE OF YOU DID A
PROPER JOB... GET
BACK AND DO IT
AGAIN!

IT'S A
WASTE OF
TIME ON
THIS OLD
TUB ...



LISTEN TO ME,
YOU USELESS LOT! THERE'S
A JERRY SURFACE RAIDER
ROUND HERE... OUR JOB IS
TO SINK HER... WE'RE
NOT GOING TO DO THAT
WITH A DIRTY SHIP!
GET CRACKING!



THE NEWS SHOCKED THE SAILORS...
THEIR DREAMS OF A PEACEFUL
UNEVENTFUL CRUISE LOOKED
LIKE BEING SHATTERED...

A SURFACE RAIDER!
THAT MEANS ELEVEN-
INCH GUNS AGAINST
OUR PERISHIN'
PEASHOOTERS!



HARKER GLARED CONTEMPTUOUSLY AT
THE DISGRUNTLED RATINGS...

THAT'S RIGHT, TAFFY -
WE'LL BE OUTGUNNED.
BUT WE'LL STILL
FIGHT - AND THAT
MEANS YOU, YOU'RE
IN THE NAVY
NOW!



GRUMBLING, THE RATINGS WENT BACK TO THEIR DUTIES ...

GET YOUR JOBS DONE PROPERLY THIS TIME! ELSE YOU'LL BE BACK AT THEM NEXT WATCH, TOO!



HARKER GREETED JOHNNY ALLEN WITH RESPECT. HE HAD SENSED THAT THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT WAS THE ONLY OTHER FIGHTING MAN ON THE VESSEL.

SOME OF THESE RATINGS GIVE ME THE WILLIES, SIR. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF WE BUMP INTO THIS RAIDER ...



BUT BEFORE HARKER COULD REPLY, THE TANNOY SPEAKER BLARED OUT AN URGENT MESSAGE ...

ACTION STATIONS!
ON THE DOUBLE...



Chapter 2. Action Stations!

INSTANTLY, HARKER WAS RACING FOR HIS GUNS, JOHNNY ALLEN HARD ON HIS HEELS. BOTH FELT A WILD SENSE OF EXCITEMENT AT THE PROSPECT OF ACTION...



ALLEN KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THE C.P.O. MEANT. HARKER DID NOT LACK COURAGE, BUT HE SAW THAT H.M.S. FORSYTE STOOD NO CHANCE AGAINST A REAL WARSHIP...



ACROSS THE SEA A LONELY MERCHANTMAN PLOUGHED THROUGH THE WATER. ALLEN DID NOT KNOW WHETHER TO CURSE OR CHEER... THERE WOULD BE NO BATTLE, OR GLORY...



ON THE BRIDGE OF FORSYTE, COMMANDER SOAMES DREW SOUR SATISFACTION FROM THE TURMOIL AGITATING THE SHIP.

AT LEAST THIS STRAY VESSEL HAS GIVEN THE MEN A LITTLE EXERCISE. WE'D BETTER SPEAK TO HER... ALTHOUGH SHE HASN'T MET THE RAIDER OR SHE WOULDN'T BE HERE!



AHOARD THE GEIER, KAPITAN LUTZ GLARED AT THE BRITISH SHIP. HIS 15-CENTIMETRE GUNS WERE PROBABLY BETTER THAN THE OLD BRITISH SIX-INCHERS ... BUT HE HAD NO WISH TO ENGAGE IN A COSTLY ACTION.

REMEMBER, WE ARE THE SWEDISH SHIP GOTJALS!
I HAVE NO WISH TO FIGHT AN ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER
JUST NOW ... I HAVE OTHER PLANS!



LOCKED DEEP IN THE持S OF THE GEIER, MAJOR BRUCE DRIVER AND THE MEN OF S.S. KANTARA STAR HELD A DISCUSSION ...

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT SHIPS... BUT I THINK WE OUGHT TO TRY TAKING THIS ONE FROM THE JERRIES!

I'M WITH YOU, MAJOR!



THE CAPTAIN AND FIRST OFFICER OF THE ILL-FATED KANTARA STAR HAD GONE DOWN WITH THEIR SHIP. NOW THE SURVIVORS LOOKED AUTOMATICALLY TO THE STRONG-WILLED SOLDIER FOR LEADERSHIP.

COULD YOU RUN THIS SHIP IF WE GRABBED HER, MAC?

AYE, MON! IF SHE'S ENGINES, I CAN RUN 'EM ...



BUT WHAT CAN WE DO AGAINST THE JERRIES? THEY'VE GOT GUNS ...

WE TAKE THEIR GUNS AWAY, DUSTY. IT'S EITHER THAT OR SPENDING THE REST OF THE WAR IN A NAZI PRISON CAMP ... IF THE NAVY DOESN'T SINK US FIRST!



BRUCE DRIVER FELT AN ANSWERING LEAP OF RESOLVE FROM THE MEN.

SOMEONE'S COMING!

THIS IS IT, CHAPS! SPEED AND SURPRISE ARE OUR ONLY WEAPONS!



ACTING AS NATURALLY AS THEY COULD, THE BRITISH WAITED AS THE IRON DOOR SWUNG OPEN ...

THERE WILL BE NO EXERCISE PERIOD TODAY, ENGLANDERS. YOU WILL ALL REMAIN HERE - AND YOU WILL KEEP QUIET!



THE RESTRICTION INFURIATED THE BRITISH SAILORS. CRAMPED UP IN THE DANK HOLD, THEY CRAVED THE SUNLIGHT AND FRESH AIR...

NO EXERCISE! AND WE'RE TO KEEP QUIET! SOMETHING'S GOING ON... YOU'RE OUT TO SINK ANOTHER SHIP!



UNDER THOSE MENACING SCHMEISSER MUZZLES, THE BRITISH SEAMEN WERE HELPLESS. BAFFLED FURY BLAZED FROM THEIR FACES ...



CONFIDENT IN THE POSSESSION OF THEIR GUNS, THE GERMANS TOOK ANOTHER STEP INTO THE PRISON CELL... ONE STEP WAS ENOUGH FOR BRUCE DRIVER AND HIS FRIENDS!



IN A MOMENT, THE TWO NAZIS WERE OVERPOWERED.



SILENTLY, THE BRITISH SEAMEN TOOK THE GERMAN GUNS, AND MADE READY TO PROWL THE CORRIDORS OF THE RAIDER GEIER!

ON GEIER'S BRIDGE, KAPITAN LUTZ ACKNOWLEDGED THE HAIL FROM THE FORSYTE ...



THIS IS S.S. GOTJAWAL,
CAPTAIN. WE HAVE SPOKEN
TO NO ONE SINCE LEAVING
RIO... YOU SAY THERE IS
A RAIDER ABOUT? THAT
IS NOT GOOD!

THE TWO SHIPS STEAMED PARALLEL COURSES. COMMANDER SOAMES FELT A TWINGE OF PITY FOR THESE LONELY MERCHANT SEAMEN...

THE NAZIS WON'T RESPECT THAT NEUTRAL FLAG... BUT WE CAN'T ESCORT THE GOTJALS ALL THE WAY...



COMMANDER SOAMES GAVE ORDERS TO STAND DOWN FROM ACTION STATIONS, AND PLOTTED A NEW COURSE FOR H.M.S. FORSYTE...

STEER ONE NINE O.
THIS SWEDISH TRAMP
CAN TELL US
NOTHING.

GLAD THAT'S OVER... ME FOR
A SPOT OF KIP!



MEANWHILE, DOWN IN THE TWEENODECKS OF THE GEIER, BRUCE DRIVER AND HIS MEN CREST ALONG THE STEEL CORRIDORS; CAPTURED WEAPONS IN THEIR HANDS, LOOKING FOR TROUBLE ...

THAT'S THE WAY, DUSTY.
WE MUST GET UP TO
THE BRIDGE,
PRONTO!

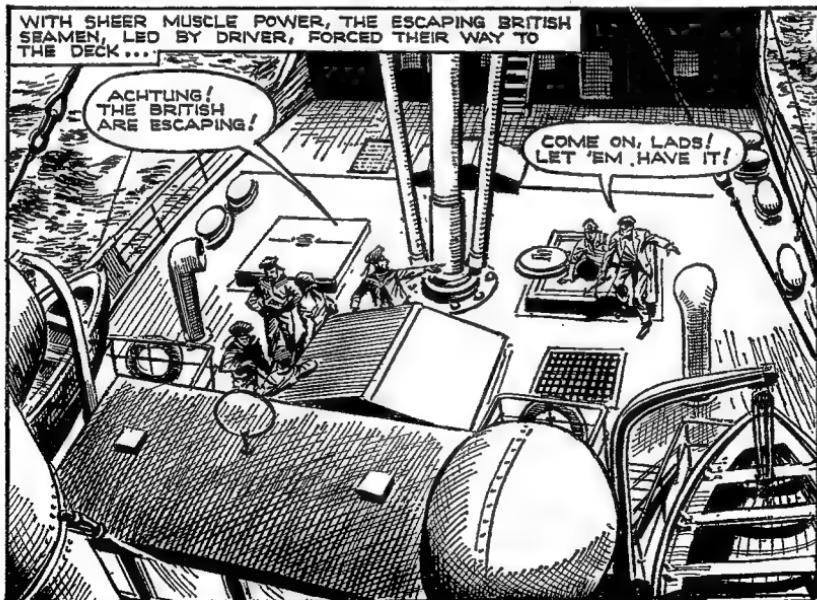
AYE... BUT THAT'S AN
AWFUL LONG WAY!



WITH SHEER MUSCLE POWER, THE ESCAPING BRITISH SEAMEN, LED BY DRIVER, FORCED THEIR WAY TO THE DECK ...

ACHTUNG!
THE BRITISH
ARE ESCAPING!

COME ON, LADS!
LET 'EM HAVE IT!



Q-Ship

INSTANTLY, A WILD MELEE BROKE OUT ABOARD THE OPEN DECKS OF GEIER ... MEN GRAPPLED AND FOUGHT WITH IRON BARS, WOODEN BILLETS, GUNS AND FISTS...



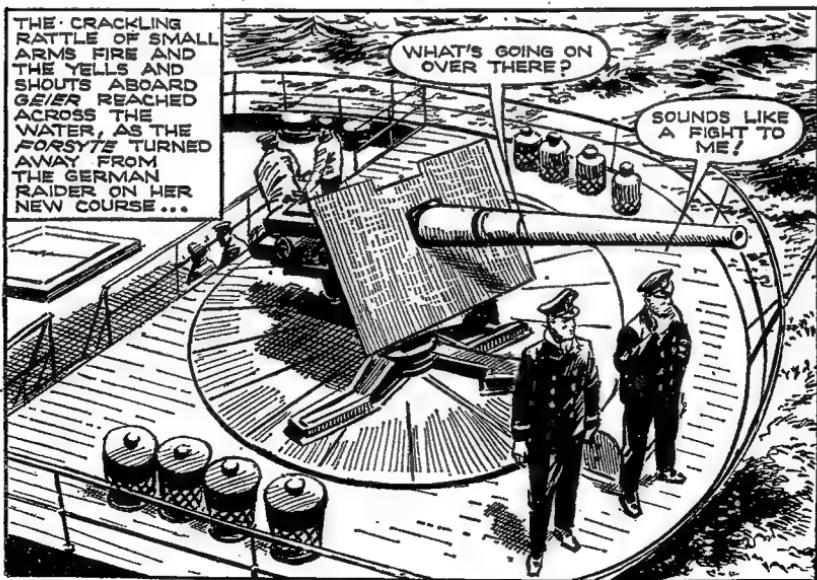
GERMAN SAILORS HURRIEDLY SNATCHED WEAPONS FROM THEIR RACKS AND RACED TO THE DECK. ON THE BRIDGE, KAPITAN LUTZ WAS IN A FURIOUS RAGE...



THE CRACKLING RATTLE OF SMALL ARMS FIRE AND THE YELLS AND SHOUTS ABOARD GEIER REACHED ACROSS THE WATER, AS THE FORSYTE TURNED AWAY FROM THE GERMAN RAIDER ON HER NEW COURSE ...

WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?

SOUNDS LIKE A FIGHT TO ME!





AS DUSTY CRUMPLED TO THE DECK, THE NAZI SAILOR TURNED ON DRIVER, CLUBBING HIM VICIOUSLY WITH THE BARREL OF THE SCHMEISSER ...



THE LAST CRUEL
BLAST OF
MACHINE GUN
FIRE RANG
OUT CLEARLY
ACROSS THE
SEA. EVEN
COMMANDER
SOAMES
COULD NOT
IGNORE IT ...

TURN BACK!
WE'LL TAKE A
LOOK AT THAT
SHIP!

AND SO H.M.S. FORSYTE
TURNED BACK TO
MEET HER DESTINY...

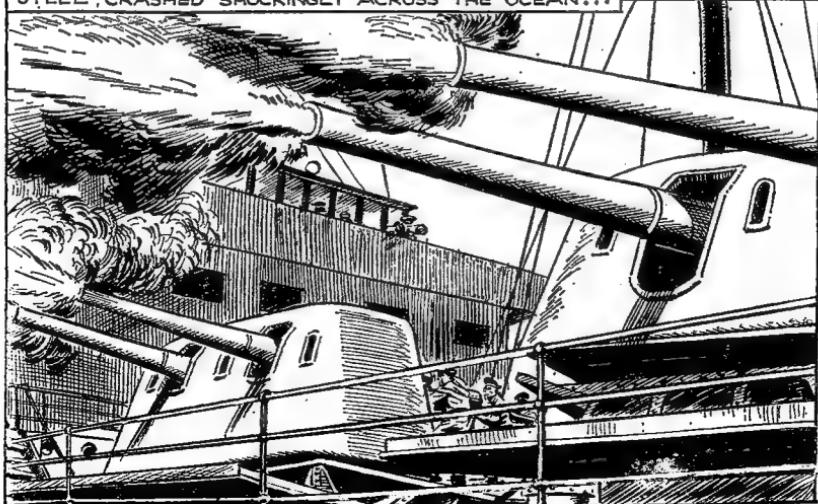


Chapter 3. Defiance

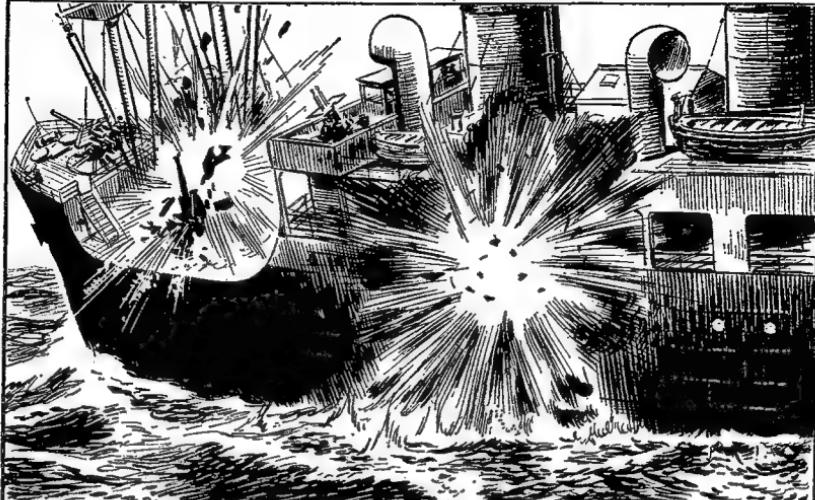
FORSYTE CAME CLOSE ALONGSIDE GEIER. LIKE A CLOWN'S MASK FALLING FROM THE FACE OF A KILLER, THE DECKHOUSES COLLAPSED AROUND THE FIFTEEN-CENTIMETRE GUNS - AND GEIER SHOWED HER TEETH!



THE AIR AND SEA SHOOK AS THE GUNS THUNDERED. FLAME AND STEEL CRASHED SHOCKINGLY ACROSS THE OCEAN...



CAUGHT BY SURPRISE AT MURDEROUS SHORT RANGE, FORSYTE SHUDDERED BENEATH THE FIRST OF A SUCCESSION OF TITANIC BLOWS...



CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER KEPT CALM AS ALL AROUND HIM WAS RENT IN BLINDING CONFUSION. HE FOUGHT HIS WAY AFT, BACK TO THE STERN GUN.

LEAVE THAT FLOAT! YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ORDERED TO ABANDON SHIP... GET TO YOUR ACTION STATIONS!



SHELL AFTER SHELL CRASHED INTO H.M.S. FORSYTE... FIRES RAGED IN HER DECKS... SMOKE POURED FROM HER TO SMEAR THE OCEAN WITH A FOUL-SMELLING PALL...

COME ON, YOU TWO!
YOU CAN HELP WITH
THE STERN GUN!



H.M.S. FORSYTE WAS DYING... AND STILL NOT ONE OF HER GUNS HAD FIRED IN REPLY TO THE CONTINUOUS SALVOES FROM GEIER...

GET TO YOUR POSTS! WE STICK HERE AND FIGHT UNTIL WE'RE ORDERED TO LEAVE!



UNDER THAT MERCILESS POUNDING, FORSYTE SWUNG AWAY FROM THE GERMAN SHIP. SHE WAS LOW IN THE WATER NOW AND SINKING DEEPER EVERY MINUTE, BUT HER STERN GUN WAS JUST ABOUT TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE ...

CENTRAL FIRE CONTROL'S GONE... WE'LL FIRE ON INDEPENDENT... FIRE!



THE LONE SIX-INCH GUN CRASHED DEAFENINGLY FROM FORSYTE. THE SHOT WAS LOW, RAISING A WHITE PLUME OF SPRAY BY GEER'S SIDE...



HARKER ROARED AT HIS MEN TO RELOAD—BUT A GERMAN SHELL LANDED SO CLOSE TO THEIR GUN THAT IT KNOCKED THE CREW OFF THEIR FEET...



HARKER WAS STILL TRYING TO STRUGGLE GAMELY TO HIS FEET AS SUB-LIEUTENANT JOHNNY ALLEN STUMBLLED ON TO THE DYING SHIP'S POOP . . .

WE MUST KEEP ON FIGHTING...
WE CAN'T GO DOWN IN DISGRACE!

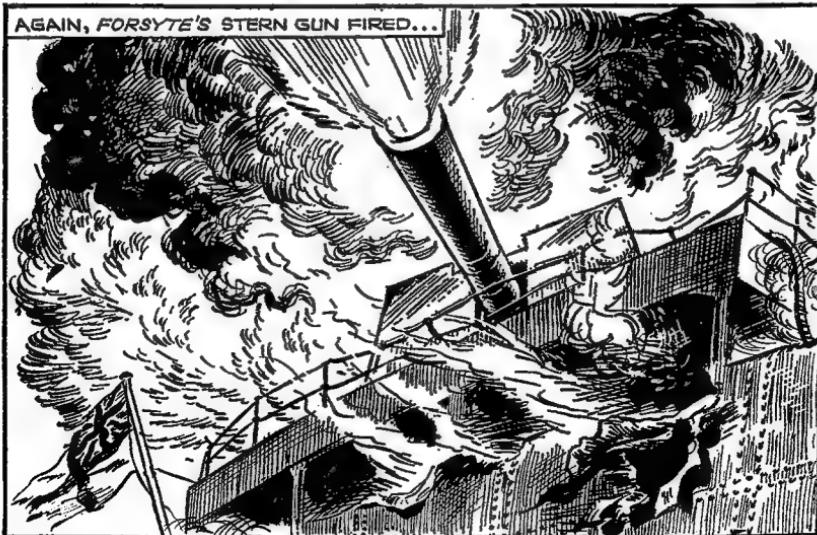
TAKE IT EASY,
HARKER. I'M GOING
TO HAVE ONE CRACK AT THAT NAZI BEFORE WE'RE SUNK...



PULSES RACING, JOHNNY ALLEN FLUNG HIMSELF ON THE GUN. HE KNEW THAT THIS WAS THE END FOR FORSYTE. BUT IF UNTIL THEN, SHE HAD BEEN USELESS, THEN IN HER DYING MOMENTS SHE WOULD SHOW SOME FIGHT...



AGAIN, FORSYTE'S STERN GUN FIRED...



THAT LAST DEFIANT SHOT CRASHED WITH
DESTRUCTIVE IMPACT INTO GEIER ...

HIMMEL! THE ENGLANDER
STILL FIGHTS!
KEEP FIRING!



LUTZ'S ORDER WAS UNNECESSARY... A BLAZING PYRE, FORSYTE SANK LOWER AND LOWER... AND THEN A TITANIC BLAST RIPPED HER APART AND SCATTERED BURNING DEBRIS WIDELY ACROSS THE SEA.



THE GERMAN SEAMEN OF GEIER PICKED UP ONLY TWENTY SURVIVORS FROM FORSYTE... TWENTY MEN... AND ONE OF THEM WAS CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER...



FOR JOHNNY ALLEN WAS NOT ONE OF THE TWENTY ...

Chapter 4. Island Haven

JOHNNY ALLEN HAD DIED, BUT HIS LAST SHELL HAD CRIPPLED GEIER, WRECKING A CONDENSER. KAPITAN LUTZ HAD TO FIND A SAFE ANCHORAGE FOR REPAIRS. FUMING, HE TOOK HIS SHIP SOUTH...

CONFOUND THAT BRITISH MERCHANT CRUISER! WE CANNOT MAKE ANY GOOD SPEED UNTIL REPAIRS ARE COMPLETED! I WISH TO SEE THE RINGLEADER OF THE PRISONERS HERE ...



THE MENACE IN KAPITAN LUTZ'S VOICE WAS NOT LOST ON HIS OFFICERS. IF THE BRITISH MAJOR HAD NOT ORGANISED HIS REVOLT, THE BATTLE WOULD NOT HAVE STARTED.

THE FUHRER WILL REWARD US FOR SINKING THE BRITISH SHIP... BUT WE HAVE SUSTAINED DAMAGE AND IT IS THE FAULT OF THE ENGLANDER MAJOR!



KAPITAN SIEGFRIED LUTZ WAITED IMPATIENTLY WHILE MAJOR BRUCE DRIVER WAS BROUGHT IN. WITH HIS SHIP CRIPPLED, HE WOULD NEED TO HOLE UP IN THE TINY SOUTH ATLANTIC ISLAND OF SANTA CRISTA FOR REPAIRS. THE KAPITAN WAS AN ANGRY MAN.



AN EXPRESSION OF GLOATING SATISFACTION FLITTED ACROSS LUTZ'S FROZEN FACE.



ON GEIER'S BRIDGE, THE SHARP-EYED LOOKOUT SPOTTED THE VAGUE OUTLINE OF A SHIP IN THE DEEP DARKNESS AROUND THEM...

JA - I WAS RIGHT -
THERE IS A SHIP
OUT THERE!

URGENT, KAPITAN!
UNKNOWN SHIP
CLOSE BY!



ONCE AGAIN, THE GERMAN SEA RAIDERS WENT ABOUT THEIR TASK WITH SMOOTH EFFICIENCY. ALL NIGHT, GEIER STALKED THE UNKNOWN SHIP... AND WITH THE DAWN CAME HER REWARD...



THE TANKER WAS CURTLY ORDERED TO HEAVE-TO. A FIFTEEN-CENTIMETRE SHELL, FIRED CLOSE TO HER BOWS, EMPHASISED THE WARNING. THEN LUTZ SENT ACROSS A BOARDING PARTY...

THE PORTSLADE HAD NO CHANCE... THOSE HUNGRY GUNS ACROSS THE WATER HELD THE KEY TO THE SITUATION...



IN FIFTEEN MINUTES, PORTSLADE WAS CAPTURED. A PRIZE CREW TOOK HER OVER AND TURNED HER TO FOLLOW GEIER...

A FULLY-LADEN TANKER!
THAT IS WORTH SEIZING, MY FRIENDS. NOW WE HEAD FOR SANTA CRISTA AND THE REPAIRS...



CONFINED BELOW IN THE DANK HODLS OF THE GEIER, BRUCE DRIVER SAT NUMBED AND SPIRITLESS. AROUND HIM, SURVIVORS FROM THE KANTARA STAR AND FORSYTE SAT AND SLEPT...

IT WAS MY FAULT.
THOSE MEN WERE
KILLED...I'LL NEVER TAKE
COMMAND AGAIN...

WHAT A DUMP! WORSE THAN
THE OLD FORSYTE... WE'VE
GOT TO BREAK OUT OF
HERE SOMEHOW!



AT LAST GEIER REACHED SANTA CRISTA,
IN A CONFINED INLET IN THE TINY ISLAND,
THE ANCHOR CHAIN RUMBLED OUT...



ON THE ADVICE OF THE SHIP'S DOCTOR,
THE BRITISH PRISONERS WERE TAKEN
ASHORE AND ALLOWED TO EXERCISE.
THERE, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER
APPROACHED MAJOR DRIVER WITH A
SUGGESTION FOR AN ESCAPE BID.



THE SCENES OF HORROR HE HAD WITNESSED HAD LEFT DRIVER WITH A BITTER MEMORY. HE COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO JOIN ANY FRESH ATTEMPT TO SEIZE THE SHIP...

SHIP HO!
THE GEFON
IN SIGHT!

THIS'LL BE
ANOTHER JERRY
SHIP...

LONGER ODDS
STILL ... I WON'T
GAMBLE WITH
OTHER MEN'S
LIVES ANY
MORE, HARKER...



GEFON STEAMED SLOWLY INTO THE LITTLE HARBOUR. HER JOURNEY FROM KIEL HAD BEEN LONG-DRAWN OUT, BUT SHE BROUGHT SUPPLIES AND AMMUNITION FOR THE RAIDER ...

OUR REPAIRS
COMPLETED AND NOW
FRESH SUPPLIES. THE
WAR IS GOING WELL,
OUR ARMY WILL
BE IN LONDON
INSIDE A MONTH...



FORTUNE SMILED ON THE AXIS FORCES THAT SUMMER OF 1940... THE BRITISH PRISONERS LISTENED WRATHFULLY AS THE GERMANS HELD PARTIES AND SING-SONGS, USING BRITISH PROVISIONS THEY HAD LOOTED FROM HELPLESS MERCHANT SHIPS...

LISTEN, MAC, WE'VE GOT TO TRY AGAIN! YOU'VE GOT TO TALK TO MAJOR DRIVER. HE UNDERSTANDS THIS SORT OF FIGHTING...

WE DID PRETTY BADLY LAST TIME, MAN!

BUT THERE WAS NO DISSUADING CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER FROM HIS PURPOSE...

ALL THAT NIGHT THE BRITISH PLANNED AND PLOTTED AND THE GERMANS SLEPT OFF THEIR CELEBRATION. BY MORNING, GOING ASHORE AGAIN, THE PRISONERS FELT A NEW SPIRIT OF REBELLION.

HEY, MAC... WHERE'S THE MAJOR THIS MORNING?

I DINNA KEN... HE WAS KEPT BACK ABOARD WHEN WE LEFT...



AT THAT MOMENT, BRUCE DRIVER STOOD IN KAPITAN LUTZ'S CABIN. LUTZ RADIATED CONFIDENCE. DRIVER FELT CAREWORN AND GUILTY, A BEATEN MAN.

YOU WILL PREPARE THE MEN
TO BE TRANSFERRED TO
THE GEFION, MAJOR.
SHE WILL TAKE THEM
BACK TO GERMANY...
THE WAR IS OVER
FOR YOU...

URGENT MESSAGE,
SIR.



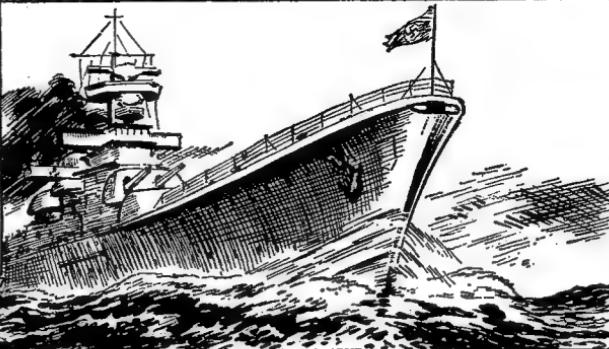
BRUCE DRIVER WATCHED WITH INTEREST AS LUTZ READ THE SIGNAL. THEN THE NAZI'S FROZEN FACE BROKE INTO A DEATH'S HEAD SMILE AND HE BANGED A FIST DOWN ON THE DESK...

AT LAST THE DAY
OF RECKONING
HAS COME FOR
YOUR ROYAL NAVY.
VON DER TANN
IS AT SEA!



Chapter 5. Break-Out

VON DER TANN, ONE OF THE NAZIS' MOST POWERFUL AND MODERN BATTLE-CRUISER WAS AT THAT MOMENT PLUNGING THROUGH THE ATLANTIC ROLLERS, THREATENING COMPLETE ANNIHILATION TO ANY SHIP TO COME WITHIN RANGE OF HER POWERFUL GUNS...



NOTHING THE BRITISH HAD AT SEA COULD STOP VON DER TANN. SHE BRUSHED AWAY AS A MAN SWATS FLIES... SHE SANK AN ARMED MERCHANT CRUISER WITHOUT PAUSING... NOW SHE HAD COME TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC TO BEGIN A CRIPPLING CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALLIED SHIPPING...



IN THE SHELTERED INLET AT SANTA CRISTA, KAPITAN LUTZ WAITED WITH HIS CAPTURED OILER TO REFUEL THE BATTLE-CRUISER. THE PRISONERS SWEATED IT OUT IN THEIR CELL BELOW DECKS OR TOOK AIMLESS EXERCISE ON THE DESERTED BEACHES...

ONLY A BATTLESHIP CAN DEAL WITH VON DER TANN... AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY BATTLESHIPS FAST ENOUGH FOR THE JOB!

AND SHE'S GOING TO REFUEL FROM LUTZ'S CAPTURED OIL. SHELL BE A MENACE IN THESE SEAS...



BRUCE DRIVER'S DARE-DEVIL COURAGE HAD FADED WITH THE DEATHS OF THOSE HE HAD LED SO DISASTROUSLY—BUT IT HAD NOT DIED. NOW THESE SAILORS WERE OPENING HIS EYES TO THE GRIM REALITIES OF THE SITUATION. VON DER TANN HAD TO BE STOPPED!

WE NEED YOUR LEADERSHIP, MAJOR DRIVER. WE MUST MAKE ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT A BREAK-OUT!

WITH A GOOD PLAN WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SEIZE THE SHIP... THE JERRIES HAVE QUITE A PARTY EVERY NIGHT NOW, IT SEEMS...



AT THE ADMIRALTY IN WHITEHALL, WORRIED MEN PLOTTED THE COURSE OF THE GERMAN BATTLE-CRUISER...



ABOARD THE PRISON-SHIP, THAT NIGHT, CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER HAD A FEW BITTER WORDS TO SAY TO THE SURVIVORS OF H.M.S. FORSYTE...



THE VERY SAME NIGHT, MAJOR DRIVER PUT THE PLAN INTO OPERATION. HE GAVE THE LEADERS OF HIS ATTACK A FINAL BRIEFING...

YOU ALL KNOW THE DRILL.
MAC WILL TAKE HIS GROUP DOWN
INTO THE ENGINE-ROOM. THE REST
OF US WILL HANDLE THE DECKS AND
BRIDGE. REMEMBER, YOU'RE
IN THE ARMY NOW!



MINUTES LATER, THE EVENING RATIONS WERE BROUGHT TO THE PRISONERS. FOUR GUARDS BEARING SCHMEISSERS MOTIONED THE BRITISH SAILORS BACK TO THE WALLS...

STAND WELL BACK,
ENGLANDERS! YOU WILL
NOT TRY TO ESCAPE
AGAIN!

RELAX, FRITZ!
WE'RE NOT GOING
TO BITE YOU!



THE ATTACK WAS SO SUDDEN THAT IT TOOK THE GERMANS COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE. IN A SPLIT-SECOND, STONES WHICH THE PRISONERS HAD PICKED UP ON THE BEACH CRASHED DOWN ON THE GUARDS' HEADS...



BEFORE THE STARTLED GERMANS COULD FIRE A SINGLE SHOT, THEY LAY SENSELESS ON THE DECKS...



LIKE PROWLING JUNGLE BEASTS, THE SAILORS PADDED TOWARDS THE ARMS RACKS, GIVING NO QUARTER TO THOSE WHO STOOD IN THE WAY...

THAT'S YOU OUT OF THE WAY, FRITZ!
HURRY IT UP,
GRAB THOSE GUNS!



MAJOR BRUCE DRIVERS CAREFUL PLAN MOVED LIKE CLOCKWORK... MAC TOOK HIS MEN AND HEADED FOR THE ENGINE-ROOM. WELL-ARMED, DRIVER LED HIS GROUP ALOFT ...

WHEN YOU HIT 'EM, HIT 'EM HARD! HARKER SHOULD BE CALLING IN ON THE JERRIES' PARTY RIGHT NOW ...



IN THE GERMAN CREW'S QUARTERS, A HUSH FELL OVER THE NOISY GROUP AS THE CHIEF PETTY OFFICER AND HIS MEN KICKED OPEN THE DOOR...

HANDS UP! I'LL SHOOT THE FIRST MAN WHO SHOUTS!



ON THE BRIDGE, GRIM BRITISH SAILORS OVERPOWERED THE SLEEPY GERMAN LOOKOUTS... THE SLIGHT SCUFFLE AROUSED KAPITAN LUTZ FROM HIS SEA CABIN...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE... HIMMEL... BRITISH!

RAISE YOUR HANDS, KAPITAN, AND KEEP QUIET!



PHASE THREE OF MAJOR DRIVERS AUDACIOUS PLAN SWUNG INTO OPERATION AS BOATS LEFT GEIER FOR GEFION AND PORTSLADE...

WHAT DO YOU WANT
NOW ... NOT MORE
SUPPLIES AT THIS
TIME OF NIGHT,
SURELY?

WE'RE RELIEVING
YOU... KAPITAN
LUTZ'S ORDERS...



THE GERMAN GUARDS ABOARD THE TWO VESSELS DID NOT KNOW WHAT HIT THEM AS THE RAIDING PARTIES LEAPT INTO ACTION...

QUICK AND QUIET...
ROUND 'EM ALL UP
AND TAKE 'EM ASHORE
... LEAVE 'EM THERE!



Q-Ship

BY DAWN, PARTIES OF PROTESTING GERMANS WERE LANDED ON THE BLEAK SHORES OF SANTA CRISTA. THE THREE SHIPS, GEIER, GEFION AND PORTSLADE WERE IN THE HANDS OF THE BRITISH!



THE ANCHOR CHAINS RATTLED INBOARD. THE THREE SHIPS HEADED FOR SANTA CRISTA'S NARROW NECK OF WATER, LEAVING THE MAROONED GERMANS TO STARE IN BAFFLED FURY...



IN THESE TENSE MOMENTS OF WAITING, BRUCE DRIVER BEGAN TO FEEL THE ICY GRIP OF FEAR. THEN A LOUD-HAILER SOUNDED FROM THE GERMAN VESSEL'S BRIDGE...

WHY ARE YOU STEAMING?
IS ANYTHING WRONG?

THERE IS A STRONG CURRENT
HERE. WE ARE CHANGING
BERTHS.



FURIOUS, KAPITAN SIEGFRIED LUTZ RACED AT THE HEAD OF HIS MAROONED MEN ALONG THE BEACH. IF HE COULD GET TO THE HEADLAND IN TIME TO WARN THE BATTLE-CRUISER, HE COULD YET TRIUMPH OVER THE BRITISH!

WHO ARE THOSE MEN ON SHORE?
WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

THEY ARE BRITISH
PRISONERS! WE GAVE
THEM A CHANCE TO
STRETCH THEIR LEGS!



LUNGS BURSTING, LUTZ AND HIS MEN RACED FRANTICALLY FOR THE HEADLAND AS THE VON DER TANN GLIDED MAGNIFICENTLY INTO THE NATURAL HARBOUR ...

DONNERWETTER!
WE MUST WARN THEM
... WE MUST!



THE TENSION WAS ALMOST UNBEARABLE; THE SWEAT STOOD OUT ON DRIVER'S FOREHEAD AS THE VON DER TANN MOVED WITH EFFORTLESS POWER PAST THE GEIER AS THE Q-SHIP HEADED TOWARDS THE HARBOUR ENTRANCE ...

WHAT A BEAUTY!
WHAT A TRAGEDY
SHE'S ENEMY!
THOSE ELEVEN-
INCH GUNS
COULD SMASH US
WITH ONE SALVO...



THEN THE GREAT BATTLE-CRUISER WAS INSIDE THE NATURAL HARBOUR.
SHE HAD LITTLE WAY ON HER NOW... AS GEFER, FOLLOWED BY THE OTHER
TWO SHIPS, BOLTED FOR THE OPEN SEA...

KAPITAN LUTZ! WHY.
ARE YOU LEAVING
HARBOUR...WE NEED
YOUR OIL!

THE ENTRANCE
IS NARROW...WE
MUST STEAM AROUND
AND HEAD IN CORRECTLY...
YOUR OIL MUST NOT BE
RISKED NOW!

THE Q-SHIP AND THE TANKER, PORTSLADE, HAD CLEARED THE HARBOUR
MOUTH WHEN GEFON BEGAN TO SWING BROADSIDE ACROSS THE GAP...

NOW,
HARKER,
NOW!
THAT'S
IT!

THE CHIEF PETTY OFFICER KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING. GEFION WAS PLUMB CENTRE AS HE AND HIS SMALL PARTY SCRAMBLED DOWN INTO THE LAUNCH ON THE BLIND SIDE OF THE VON DER TANN. LUTZ GROUNDED HIS TEETH IN IMPOTENT RAGE ...

THE BLIND FOOLS !
CAN'T THEY SEE EVERYTHING'S
GONE WRONG ?

THEY'VE BEEN ALERTED,
HERR KAPITAN ... SEE,
THEY ARE RUNNING
FOR THE GUNS !



BUT THAT ALERT HAD COME FAR TOO LATE. NEXT SECOND, GEFION, METICULOUSLY SABOTAGED BY HARKER, ERUPTED TO THE HEAVENS ...



THE BOTTOM RIPPED OUT OF HER, GEFFION BEGAN TO SETTLE DEEP IN THE HARBOUR ENTRANCE. ALREADY, THE LONG SNOOTS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHT CENTIMETRE GUNS OF THE 'VON DER ZAAN' ROSE VENGEFULLY TO SEEK OUT THE FLEEING SHIPS...

OPEN FIRE AT ONCE!
THE SWINE MUST NOT
GET AWAY!

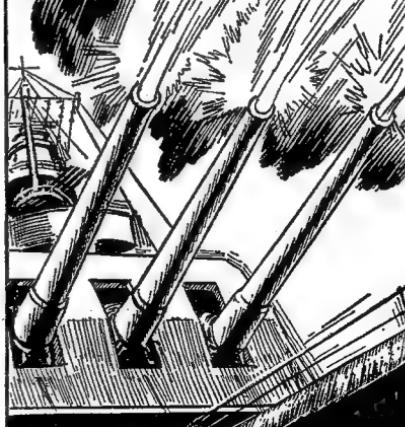


CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HARKER WAS GREETED BY AN ELATED MAJOR DRIVER ABOARD GEIER...

MAGNIFICENT, HARKER! RIGHT SLAP IN THE CHANNEL! THEY'LL NEVER GET OUT NOW!



AT THAT EXACT MOMENT, 'VON DER ZAAN' LET FLY WITH HER THREE STERN GUNS... A FEARSOME SALVO THAT REFLECTED HER COMMANDER'S FURY AT THE COOL DARING OF THE ESCAPED BRITISH PRISONERS.



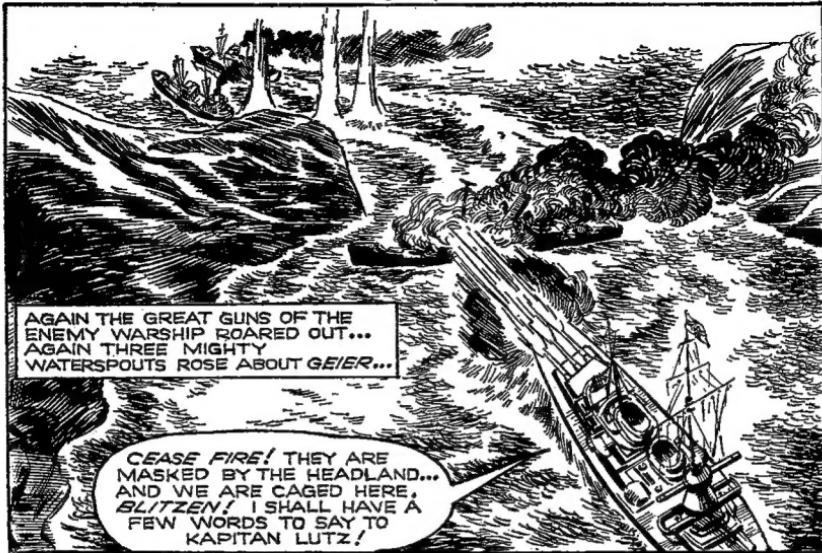
THREE ENORMOUS FOUNTAINS JETTED FROM THE SEA CLOSE BY GEIER,
AND WATER CRASHED TORRENTIALLY UPON HER DECKS. BUT SHE
WAS NOT HIT.



QUICK ORDERS RAPPED FROM THE MERCHANT SPARKS IS GETTING OFF
NAVY OFFICER IN COMMAND OF THE FORMER A SIGNAL... THE ROYAL
Q-SHIP. HELM'SMAN. BRING HER IN
HARD A-PORT,
UNDER THE CLIFFS... THEY
CAN'T BLAST THROUGH A
SOLID ROCK, EVEN WITH
THOSE GREAT ELEVEN-
INCHERS...

A SIGNAL... THE ROYAL
NAVY WILL BE
HERE SOON...





CEASE FIRE! THEY ARE
MASKED BY THE HEADLAND...
AND WE ARE CAGED HERE.
BLITZEN! I SHALL HAVE A
FEW WORDS TO SAY TO
KAPITAN LUTZ!

WITH THE WHITE ENSIGN PROUDLY FLUTTERING, GEIER AND PORTSLADE
HEADED NORTH - TO MEET TWO BATTLESHIPS OF THE FORCE HASTILY
FLUNG TO SEA TO SEARCH OUT VON DER TANN...

YOU SHOULD ARRIVE BEFORE
THEY HAVE TIME TO BLOW
UP THE OBSTRUCTION IN THE
CHANNEL. BUT WATCH OUT,
YOU'VE A CAGED TIGER
THERE... GOOD
HUNTING!

I DON'T KNOW HOW
YOU MANAGED IT...
BUT THANKS!



THE ROYAL NAVY, THE MERCHANT NAVY AND THE ARMY — THEY HAD ALL WORKED TOGETHER TO VANQUISH A POWERFUL ENEMY.

YOUNG JOHNNY ALLEN CAN REST IN PEACE NOW... THE MEN OF THE OLD FORSYTE TURNED UP TRUMPS, AFTER ALL.

... AND DUSTY AND ALL THOSE WHO DIED UNDER THE MURDEROUS GUNS OF THIS Q-SHIP HAVE BEEN AVENGED.



VON DER TANN COULD SURRENDER — OR FIGHT! WHICHEVER COURSE SHE CHOSE, THE END WOULD BE THE SAME. HER VOYAGE OF TERROR WAS OVER.



THE ROYAL NAVY MIGHT BE SHORT OF SHIPS, HER SAILORS RAW RECRUITS... BUT IN THE END THE SEAFARING BLOOD OF THE NATION WOULD WIN THROUGH.

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